



Like 'could be start of cascade effect'

brought forward the occurrence of the next. "It may be that there is a bit of a cascade effect, when you have a series of these as happened in 1929. If it happened once it could happen again."

It was possible the Canterbury tremor was triggered by the 7.8 quake in Fiordland in July 2009.

Professor Smith is working on a scientific paper based on the theory that New Zealand was rocked by an "aftershock sequence" from 1848 to 1942 - and said this could recur. "We have got no idea what the return time would be."

It was also more likely than not that the 8.2 quake that shook Wellington and Wairarapa in 1855 was related to the 1848 Marlborough quake of 7.8.

Just as Saturday's quake was on an unknown fault line, Wellington needed to be prepared for

a large destructive quake on an unknown fault. "We could make the mistake of thinking we've got a handle on known faults, but we could have unknown faults."

The Earthquake Commission's fellow in seismic studies, John Townend, also said hazard estimates for Wellington were based entirely on known faults.

Although quakes could be connected, he believed Wellington was too far from Canterbury to be affected by a quake of that size. "When an earthquake happens on a particular fault, it locally relieves pressure. But the rest of the faults around it rejoin to equilibrate and it does transfer stress to great distances."

Victoria University professor Martha Savage said there was always a concern an earthquake would trigger others because they occurred in clusters. How-

ever, experts still did not have a good handle on the "clustering" effect, and quantifying the increased risk was difficult.

Although it was a remote possibility that Saturday's quake could trigger a quake in Wellington, Professor Savage said this should not be discounted.

Professor Smith said owners of unreinforced masonry homes and chimneys needed to demolish them or make them safe.

Pieter Burghout, chief executive of building industry research group Branz, said Wellington's homes would be able to better withstand Saturday's earthquake as the city's hills and earthquake risk meant fewer were built from brick.

While Christchurch was rocked by aftershocks yesterday, a magnitude 5.2 quake rattled Hawke's Bay and a magnitude 4



Be prepared: Professor Euan Smith says the Canterbury quake could trigger further large tremors elsewhere. Owners of unreinforced masonry homes and chimneys should demolish them or make them safe.

Photo: CHRIS SKELTON

"The plates are stuck together, so any signal from one would be transferred to the other, but it's impossible to say whether these are unusual."

ER A12
S B7

TODAY

CLOUD AND DRIZZLE, WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY BUILDING UP

WELLINGTON CITY
HUTT VALLEY
PORIRUA
KAPITI COAST

HIGH 13
HIGH 13
HIGH 14
HIGH 15

LOW 8
LOW 7
LOW 8
LOW 8

TOMORROW

A RAIN-BEARING FRONTAL BAND IS PLAYING OUR TUNE

AUCKLAND
AFTERNOON RAIN
TAURANGA
EVENING RAIN

TAUPO
TURNING FINE
WHANGANUI
TURNING FINE

GISBORNE
CLOUDY PERIODS
NAPIER/HASTINGS
CLOUDY PERIODS

PALMERSTON
FINE
MASTERTON
CLOUDY

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